



## ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Last Review:	February 2022
Committee:	Learning
Date Ratified:	15 February 2022
Next Review:	May 2025

### What is Bullying?

Bullying is usually defined as behaviour that is:

- repeated
- intended to hurt someone either physically or emotionally

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying can take many forms:

- physical assault
- teasing
- making threats
- name calling
- cyberbullying – (via text messages, social media or gaming, which can include the use of images and video) (DFE 'Preventing and tackling bullying' – July 2017)

Bullying, especially if less unaddressed, can have a devastating effect on individuals. It can be a barrier to learning and have serious consequences for their mental health. Bullying which takes places at school does not only affect an individual during childhood but can have a lasting effect on their lives well into adulthood.

By effectively preventing and tackling bullying, schools can help to create safe, disciplined environments where pupils are able to learn and fulfil their potential.

### Rationale

We are committed to attaining a bullying free environment for all of our students and staff, so they can work in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying or harassment of any kind is unacceptable at our school. If bullying does occur, all students and staff should be able to report it, in the knowledge that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We are therefore a TELLING school. This means that *anyone* who knows that bullying is happening to themselves or to anyone else, is expected to use one of the channels detailed in this policy.

The information in this policy is available to all staff, students, parents and governors. This policy should also be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Single Equality Scheme
- Behaviour Policy
- Internet and Network User Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Home/School Agreement

**Aim:**

We will achieve this by:

- making it clear that all forms of bullying are unacceptable
- supporting / safeguarding victims of bullying
- supporting bullies, in order to change their behaviour and applying sanctions where appropriate
- acting upon the recorded incidents in a reasonable, proportionate and consistent manner
- communicating all instances of bullying to relevant persons
- raising awareness of what bullying is and how we deal with it
- recognising the signs of bullying
- triggering sources of support, for both victim and bully
- ensuring Anti-Bullying Week activities take place in November of each year
- ensuring staff are trained to deal with bullying

**Why do people bully others?**

It can take place for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the protected characteristics (under the Equality Act 2010).

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

Some people are more likely to be the target of bullying because of the attitudes and behaviours some young people have towards those who are different from themselves.

Some people with SEN or disabilities can lack the social or communication skills to report incidents such incidents so it is important that staff are alert to the potential bullying this group faces.

**Bullying can take many forms:**

1. Physical: pushing, kicking, hitting, any form of violence, threats
2. Verbal: name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, persistent teasing
3. Emotional: tormenting, threatening, ridicule, humiliation, exclusion from groups or activities
4. Racist / cultural: racial, religious and cultural abuse
5. Sexual: unwanted physical contact, abusive comments, and comments about gender/sexuality
6. Cyber: unpleasant/negative text messages, messaging, emails, social networking sites

**The following behaviours can constitute bullying at Sir William Romney's School** (taking into consideration the definition of bullying as "behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time that intentionally hurts another individual or group, whether physically or emotionally."):

- pushing/shoving/blocking someone's way
- name calling about sexuality
- name calling about race
- name calling about other things
- deliberately ignoring, excluding or ostracising someone
- threatening
- hitting/kicking/punching
- spreading rumours
- taking/damaging other people's belongings

- demanding food/money
- making people do things against their will
- intimidating
- making people embarrassed/uncomfortable when they do well at something
- insulting someone's family
- teasing repeatedly
- swearing
- ganging up on someone
- inciting other people to bully
- hiding other people's belongings
- writing unpleasant graffiti
- spitting
- making hurtful or unnecessary comments
- writing, texting or blogging unpleasant notes or comments
- making fun of personal appearance/clothing/hair
- getting older brothers/sisters/friends to bully for you
- mimicking
- vandalising property

### **How do we prevent bullying?**

The key to prevention is the development of positive relationships. Staff model positive relationships to students. When conflict arises our default position is one of "de-escalation" and moving towards a win-win situation. We raise the issue in tutorial and PD lessons. Anti-bullying assemblies take place. We encourage students to report anti-social behaviour so that it does not escalate into bullying. Students are made aware that we take bullying seriously and we will do all that we can to make it stop when it is reported.

We employ preventative methods to discourage bullying and encourage positive citizenship:

- a positive ethos
- peer mentoring
- Student Council
- PD curriculum
- anti-bullying assemblies
- anti-bullying posters

### **How can parents, staff and students recognise that bullying of a student may be taking place?**

We can all be vigilant in identifying any of the following student behaviours:

- frightened of walking to or from school
- reluctant to go on the school / public bus
- beg to be driven to school
- unwilling to go to school (school phobic)
- truancy
- becoming withdrawn, anxious, or lacking in confidence
- start stammering
- submits damaged or incomplete work
- have possessions which are damaged or "go missing"
- ask for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully)
- have dinner or other monies frequently "lost"
- have unexplained cuts or bruises
- become aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- begin to bully other children and/or siblings
- loss of appetite
- be frightened to say what is wrong
- give improbable excuses for any of the above

- be afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
- be nervous and jumpy when a cyber message is received

### **What can students do about bullying?**

If a student is being bullied, s/he must tell someone. This could be a teacher, tutor, parent, carer, learning manager, prefect, buddy, school nurse, behaviour officer, friend, brother, sister i.e. anyone you trust. An alternative is to use the e-mail help line on the school website and above. Students should also report bullying again if it continues.

Students should avoid isolated areas in school, avoid being alone if they are worried about being bullied and seek a place of safety e.g. library, Support for Learning area, dining room or ICT.

If a student sees someone being bullied or suspects that this may be happening, s/he must tell a member of staff. At Sir William Romney's, a student should never stand by and watch another student being bullied; s/he should fetch help or intervene directly. If a student offers silent support or laughter to the bully when bullying takes place, that student will be considered to be part of the bullying (as outlined in DfE publication "Safe to Learn") and as such will also be subject to the school's sanction guidelines.

If a student knows that s/he is bullying and wants help, s/he should talk to one of the people listed above and seek help. We will support a student who wants to change.

Some children can be very good at hiding their feelings. Children may show any of the signs above that something is not right. Being sensitive to changes and communicating with the school is important. Help is also available on the internet. These sites are listed in the anti-bullying section of the school website. If cyber-bullying is taking place, keep the messages as evidence. If a parent has any concerns, or if a child has disclosed bullying, they should contact the school and speak to a tutor, Behaviour Officer, a Learning Manager or an SLT member.

We hope parents and carers will:

- talk to their children about school and how students relate to each other
- talk about bullying from time to time, using a secure website as a focus
- teach children not to exclude others and to stand up for others
- model positive relationships with others
- take bullying seriously if a child raises it

### **What should staff do if they witness bullying or it is reported to them?**

Staff must take action with all incidents of bullying, even if it appears to be low level. If time permits, they should, in the first instance, listen to the person who has been bullied or reported being bullied. If, for example, the report is made at the end of a lesson and the member of staff has to teach again immediately, the situation should be referred immediately to the Behaviour Officer, who will implement the strategy outlined in the next section. If the Behaviour Officer is not available, then it should be reported directly to the appropriate Learning Manager or a member of SLT.

Staff must also:

- set an example for students in the way they interact with each other and with students
- avoid the use of casual slang and derogatory terms in conversation with each other when students are present or might be able to overhear
- organise teaching areas to ensure that all students feel safe
- regularly check the staff briefing notes regarding student issues
- regularly check the SEN notes regarding student issues
- use a range of teaching and learning styles and strategies inclusive of all students

Tutors/Learning Managers should:

- monitor their groups closely and share information with others in their team
- use a variety of techniques to ensure positive relationships develop within their groups
- listen to individuals and never make judgements until all students have been heard
- celebrate positive behaviour and achievements

- involve tutor groups in anti-bullying work during November
- involve tutor groups in discussions about the data generated by student surveys
- ensure that tutor groups respond to school council initiatives regarding bullying

### **Bullying which occurs outside the school premises**

School staff members have the power to discipline pupils for misbehaving outside the school premises. Sections 90 and 91 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 say that a school's disciplinary powers can be used to address pupils' conduct when they are not on school premises and are not under the lawful control or charge of a member of school staff, but only if it would be reasonable for the school to regulate pupils' behaviour in those circumstances. This may include bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises, such as on school or public transport, outside the local shops, or in a town or village centre.

When bullying takes place outside of school it will be investigated and acted on. The Headteacher will also consider whether it is appropriate to notify the police of the action taken against pupil.

While school staff members have the power to discipline pupils for bullying that occurs outside school, they can only impose the disciplinary sanction and implement that sanction on the school premises or when the pupil is under the lawful control of school staff, for instance on a school trip.

### **What should happen when bullying is seen or reported?**

Students should be encouraged to report all cases of bullying to parents, tutors, teachers, Teaching Assistants, the Behaviour Officer, Learning Managers, the Phoenix Room staff, Lunchtime Supervisors, other responsible adults in school, peer mentors or prefects.

- The student should have the opportunity to talk about the situation, with a member of staff in a quiet place, not overheard by others
- The student should be reassured, that the school takes bullying very seriously
- The student has the right to ask for it to go no further BUT the student's welfare must be taken into consideration, especially if there are clear and detrimental effects to the student's emotional and mental well-being
- If during the investigation of a bullying incident a safeguarding issue arises the investigation should be stopped immediately and the matter reported to the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately
- Once the situation has been discussed and further action deemed necessary, a written statement should be taken from the victim, the bully and any third party witnesses, including members of staff, who should give their statements separately
- The incident will be recorded on SIMS by the Learning Manager, the Behaviour Officer or staff in the Phoenix Room. At the end of the academic year, the SLT member will print out the record for the year and place it on file.
- Parents will be informed, usually via a telephone call, by either the Learning Manager or the Behaviour Officer
- The tutors of students involved should be informed
- The SENCO should be informed if any student on the SEN register is either a victim or a perpetrator
- The lead professional should be informed by the Learning Manager if a student involved is currently being assessed through the Common Assessment Framework

### **What sanctions may take place?**

If a criminal offence has been committed, the Headteacher must be informed. The Headteacher will take action according to legislation and the School Behaviour Policy.

Sanctions may include:

- breaktime, lunchtime or after school detention
- internal isolation in the Focus Room
- implementation of a Behaviour Support Plan
- fixed-term exclusion
- off-site provision through the alternative provision services

- permanent exclusion

It is important to recognise that each case will be considered separately and that the above sanctions are not automatic. Each student is an individual and has individual needs. Students may be experiencing difficult circumstances e.g. family health issues and these will be taken into account. Particular care must be taken when dealing with a student who has been subjected to bullying and subsequently becomes involved in disciplinary situations as a result.

In addition, if cyber-bullying has taken place in school, sanctions may include suspension of internet or network use in school. If cyber-bullying has taken place outside school, parents and students will be advised to keep the evidence and parents will be advised to consider placing the matter in the hands of the police. Students will also be advised to report all abuse on social networking sites to the site management.

#### **How do we support the victims of bullying after an incident has been reported/investigated?**

- follow-up “check-ins” agreed with the student e.g. next day, same week, following week
- tutors to monitor for “signs and symptoms” and verbal check on student’s well-being
- regular meetings with Phoenix Room staff to develop strategies
- possible use of restorative justice strategies
- possible referral to School Nurse
- use of restorative justice
- possible referral to outside agencies
- check with parents as to progress following the reported incident
- consider a Multi-Agency Group approach if necessary.

#### **How do we investigate Cyber-Bullying?**

The rapid development of, and widespread access to, technology has provided a new medium for ‘virtual’ bullying, which can occur in or outside school. Cyber-bullying is a different form of bullying and can happen at all times of the day, with a potentially bigger audience, and more accessories as people forward on content at a click.

The Education Act 2011 amended the power in the Education Act 1996 that a teacher can be formally authorised by the Headteacher to seize an electronic device. The staff member can examine data or files, and delete these, where there is good reason to do so. This power applies to all schools and there is no need to have parental consent to search through a young person’s mobile phone.

Material on the device that is suspected to be evidence relevant to an offence, or that is a pornographic image of a child or an extreme pornographic image, should not be deleted prior to giving the device to the police. If a staff member finds material that they do not suspect contains evidence in relation to an offence, they can decide whether it is appropriate to delete or retain the material as evidence of a breach of school discipline.

#### **How do we support the bullies after an incident has been reported/investigated?**

The following actions may take place, depending on circumstance:

- working with Phoenix Room staff to understand the causes and consequences of his/her actions
- possible referral to School Nurse
- possible referral to outside agencies
- check with parents as to progress, following the reported incident
- possible use of restorative justice

#### **Bullying of adults or by adults.**

Any allegation made of bullying of a student by a member of staff must be referred immediately to the Headteacher who will investigate thoroughly. If a parent raises the issue in a conversation with any member of staff, the member of staff must stop the conversation and explain that it has to be referred to the Headteacher; no discussion regarding the allegation can take place.

Sir William Romney's Anti-Bullying Policy applies to everyone. Bullying of colleagues will not be tolerated. Staff must model positive behaviour to students. Any allegations of bullying by staff of staff will be investigated by the Headteacher. If the Headteacher is accused of bullying, the Chair of Governors will investigate.

### **Bullying of adults by students**

Any allegation of bullying of a member of staff by students must be referred immediately to the Headteacher who will investigate thoroughly.

### **Staff training**

Staff must ensure that they are aware of the lines of communication within the school and use them. Any concerns about bullying should be passed to tutors, the Behaviour Officer or Learning Managers. All staff will be able to access the policy on the School website.

The SLT member responsible for Anti-bullying will ensure that any new information and strategies are made available to all staff and that the information on the School website is up to date.

### **Anti-Bullying Week NOVEMBER**

There will be a focus on Anti-Bullying Week each November. The SLT member responsible for anti-bullying will ensure that the event is a focus for the whole school and involve as many subjects as possible in supporting activities.

### **How will the policy be reviewed?**

The policy will be reviewed annually. Pastoral Leaders will be involved in this process.